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## Korea

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# Asia Foundation runs Korean opposition

by David Hammer

As the countdown to the Dec. 16 South Korean elections begins, opposition candidate Kim Dae Jung has declared that if ruling party candidate Roh Tae Woo wins the election, that by itself is proof of fraud. "I state clearly my conviction that Roh Tae Woo . . . cannot be elected in a free and fair election," said Kim Dae Jung Nov. 12. "Only by fraud is it possible for him to be elected, and I am convinced that our people will never condone such an election."

The aim of such pronouncements is to bring to South Korea the same scenario used to overthrow Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. The international credibility for this replay will come from the same U.S. National Endowment for Democracy and other Project Democracy spin-offs that perpetrated the "fraud" charges against Marcos. Chief among them is the Asia Foundation.

At the time it was established, in 1983, the National Endowment for Democracy was slated to give \$5 million out of a total of \$20 million in funds, to the Asia Foundation. Said NED's first annual report (p. 16), "The Asia Foundation's programs directly serve the goals of Project Democracy." The NED also noted, "The grants to the Asia Foundation will be administered by the Department of State."

This arrangement has now been amplified by the 1986 posting of Gaston Sigur as assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern and Pacific affairs. From 1962 to 1972, Sigur, who is now charged with bringing down the ruling party in South Korea, was a top official of the Asia Foundation. In 1986, his son Chris became executive assistant to Asia Foundation President Haydn Williams.

The Asia Foundation boasted in its 1986 annual report that it was "able to support many of the popular initiatives to rebuild and restructure the democratic system in the Philippines," and worked "with a number of civic organizations," in particular in mass publicity on "the methods of election fraud." The foundation was a prime funder of the National Movement for Free Elections, Namfrel, a pro-Aquino operation that gave the U.S. coup international cover.

In South Korea, the Asia Foundation, under direction of its man on the scene, Ben Kremenak, has poured over a million dollars in 1986 and 1987 into opposition-related institutions.

As the Asia Foundation states in its 1986 report: "Law,

democratic institutions, and Korean-American relations were the three main centers of program activity. Although the foundation has had projects in these areas for many years [it has been in Korea 32 years], they recently have become of prime importance. Most Koreans agree that political development has replaced economic development as the most important item on the national agenda. . . . To encourage efforts to bring about needed reforms . . . during FY 1986 the Foundation spent approximately \$634,500 on 99 grants in support of 87 projects involving more than 60 organizations scattered throughout Korea."

A glance at these projects shows that the foundation has been key in building the grass-roots organizations of support for Kim Dae Jung, in particular, against the Korean government:

- Pusan National University, Student Guidance Center: for a democratic education and legal assistance outreach program for industrial workers in the Pusan area.

- Chonnam National University, Center for Regional Development: for the third year of a training program in democratic processes for civic leaders.

- Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Regional Studies Institute: for a comprehensive and historical study of the Korean election system.

- Korean Social Science Research Council: for a national symposium on "Election and Democracy in Korea" to compare the various election studies and to examine the place of elections in the democratic process.

- Chung Ang University, Department of Political Science: for two faculty members to participate in the post-EROPA Conference observation of the Philippines presidential election.

- Korean Federation of Bar Associations: for publication of a book, *Human Rights Cases for 1986*.

- Journalist: for a three-month research on 'The Korean Press under the U.S. Military Government in Korea 1945-48' at the George Washington University and the National Archives. (The journalist was Kwan Sang Park, editor of the anti-government *Tong A Ilbo*, brought to George Washington by Sigur in his capacity as director of the Sino-Soviet Institute there.)

- Korean Social Science Research Council: for a study of the student movement in Korea.

The foundation also aids more radical International Human Rights Law Group. The IHRLG, also a key player in the Philippines coup, has dispatched two representatives, Craig Cramer and Michelle Lee, to Korea the "human rights" crusaders during the pre-election period. Their work, Cramer reports, will be facilitated by the contacts set up by the Asia Foundation. The funds for the IHRLG's "Korea Project" come from the ARCA Foundation, set up by the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco fortune. ARCA is also a major funder of the Kim Dae Jung-affiliated North American Coalition for Human Rights in Korea.